



GET INVOLVED: START VOLUNTEERING!

FACILITATOR GUIDE

SESSION OVERVIEW

This 40 minute session introduces students to the multiple benefits that result from volunteering. Determining personal readiness and discovering options for meaningful volunteer involvement will be emphasized. *Note: This session may be used as preparation for organizing a formalized student volunteer program.*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will recognize the benefits of volunteering.
2. Students will be able to identify the qualities of an outstanding volunteer.
3. Students will understand how to select a meaningful / beneficial volunteering opportunity.
4. Students will develop ideas about where to volunteer in their community.

MATERIALS

Handout 1 – The Value of Volunteering

Handout 2 – So You Think You Can Volunteer!

Handout 3 – Finding the Right Fit!

Appendix – Sample Volunteer Activity Forms: *Volunteer Job Description, Application and Parent Permission Form, Volunteer Activity Log, Reflecting on My Volunteer Experience, Volunteer Supervisor Reference*

Teacher Reference: “Tip Sheet – Volunteering: 6 Ways Volunteering Can Boost Your Career” available at <http://alis.alberta.ca/ep/eps/tips/tips.html?EK=3305>

OVERVIEW AND TIMELINES

Introduction – What is Volunteering?	3 Minutes
What's in it for Me?	10 Minutes
Can You be a Volunteer Star?	10 Minutes
Where to Volunteer – Finding the Right Fit!	15 Minutes
Wrap Up	2 Minutes



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ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION – WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING?

Ask the students to define what volunteering means to them. *Volunteering means ALL of the following:*

- *Giving your time and energy without expecting to get paid*
- *Sharing your experiences, interests, skills*
- *Caring for and helping others*
- *Contributing to the well-being of a community*

WHY VOLUNTEER – WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?

Explain to the students that while volunteering is primarily thought of as an act of giving and sharing it is important to realize that being involved in volunteering also provides many returns to the volunteer. Even though volunteering does not provide a pay cheque it does pay off in many ways besides dollars and cents. The investment students make with their time and effort will have many valuable rewards!

Group Brainstorming Activity:

Ask the students to list as many benefits or rewards of volunteering as possible. Record their responses on the board.

Explain to the students that all of the benefits of volunteering can be grouped into three main categories of value:

- Workplace Readiness – *benefits that will prepare the student to look for work, get work and keep work*
- Career Planning – *benefits that will help the student find educational and occupational direction and success*
- Personal Satisfaction – *benefits that will bring the student enjoyment and fulfillment*

Distribute **Handout 1 – The Value of Volunteering**

Instruct students to record the appropriate code from the three value categories on the right side of the page beside each of the benefits of volunteering listed on the left side of the handout. (Answer Key – page 7 of Facilitator’s Guide)

Alternate Activity: Lead a review of the list of benefits with the students, discussing as a group which broad value category each benefit would fit into.

Upon completion, emphasize that the value of volunteering is broad and the benefits many. Volunteering involves giving a little and getting back a lot!



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CAN YOU BE A VOLUNTEER STAR?

Indicate to students that, while the benefits of volunteering are great, it is important to carefully assess whether or not or how much they are able to commit to a volunteer activity. Explain that there are two questions they need to ask themselves before deciding to volunteer and to begin the search for a suitable volunteer activity.

1) How Much Time do I Have to Volunteer?

Ask the students to list all of the demands on their time.

- *School and homework, part time jobs, team and club involvement, lessons and courses, home responsibilities, family activities, time with friends...*

Inform students that volunteer opportunities require different levels of time commitment. Some are on-going and require a regular weekly commitment over several months such as volunteering at a hospital or an animal shelter. Others are one-time events that require a short-term commitment of a few hours such as helping at a water station at a “fun run” or being involved in a highway clean-up.

Explain that if students want to make a commitment to a volunteer activity it is extremely important that, first of all, they make sure their schedules can accommodate the activity. Finding a volunteer activity that fits with their schedules, even if it is only for a short period of time, will allow them to follow through with the volunteer commitment and reap the rewards of participating.

Note: Remind students that if they are dependant on parents for transportation it is important to discuss potential volunteer activities with them before a commitment is made.

2) Do I Have The Qualities Necessary to be an Outstanding Volunteer?

Explain to students that there are certain attitudes, skills and characteristics that make an ideal volunteer. Discuss the importance of students being aware of these qualities when assessing themselves to determine if they have what it takes and if they are ready to be outstanding volunteers – volunteer stars!

Distribute Handout 2 – So You Think You Can Volunteer!

Explain that this handout profiles eight of the most important qualities necessary to become a volunteer. Together with the students, review each of the qualities. Ask them to check off in the appropriate box the qualities that they possess as a way to determine their level of readiness to volunteer.



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WHERE TO VOLUNTEER – FINDING THE RIGHT FIT!

Tell students that, much like finding the right occupation, the most positive and beneficial volunteering experiences will come from the ones that match who they are – their interests, strengths, skills, values and personality – and involve activities they enjoy doing.

Group Brainstorming Activity:

Ask the students to suggest volunteer activities within their community. Record their responses on the board. Add additional ideas to this list that reflect potential community volunteer work.

Note: This list can be used to supplement the ideas found on Handout 3.

Inform students of local agencies that may be aware of particular volunteer opportunities within their community.

FACILITATOR INFORMATION

Each community, town and city offers numerous volunteer opportunities. Some types of opportunities can be found in both small and large communities while others are specific and unique within a given community. The following is information to assist you in determining current volunteer opportunities in your community.

- Red Deer – Each week Volunteer Red Deer posts an updated listing of volunteer opportunities within the city and surrounding area. Go to www.volunteerreddeer.ca and click on “Volunteer Opportunities” to view this extensive link. Not all opportunities listed will be available to youth.
- Many Central Alberta towns have links through their official town websites to agencies within their communities that publicize current volunteer opportunities.
- Communities that have a Family and Community Support Services office, a Volunteer Centre or a Neighbourhood Place are resources for information about local organizations, groups, special projects or events in need of youth volunteers.
- An excellent option for students to consider is the concept of “family volunteering”. Some organizations that will not accept youth volunteers alone are open to volunteer assistance when provided by a family unit where parents accompany and work with their youth.
- Create your own volunteer work! Students who are enthusiastic, organized and dedicated can be encouraged to develop a special project or event that will benefit a cause they are passionate about. This could be done at school or outside of school. Other students could then be involved in this project or event to increase their own volunteer experiences.
- Implementation of a formal volunteering program within a school can provide a framework to offer volunteer opportunities to all students. It is recommended that teachers carefully review available volunteer activities and the time commitment required so that students can be placed appropriately in an activity and achieve success.



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Distribute Handout 3 – Finding the Right Fit!

Explain to the students that this handout is an activity to help them generate suggestions for possible volunteer work within the community that would match specific information about themselves and create a good “fit”. The resulting ideas could become a focus for their volunteer work. Select and read a sample of the following examples to demonstrate how an individual’s interests and skills could link to a volunteer activity:

“Finding the Right Fit!” Examples

1. An outgoing student who enjoys sports and is thinking of becoming a recreation programmer or a physiotherapist could volunteer at a senior’s lodge leading residents in exercise using a Wii system or assist at a summer sports camp for youth.
2. A student who has a strong interest in the environment and good leadership skills could co-ordinate a recycling program at school, organize a neighbourhood spring clean-up or assist with special events at a local nature centre.
3. A student who is creative and has good technology skills could design posters, flyers or newsletters for a local cause or event that he is interested in such as the Cancer Society or Ducks Unlimited.
4. A student who is a good team player, likes to be outside and work with her hands could volunteer to help neighbours with odd jobs and yard care or become involved in a Habitat for Humanity project.
5. A student who is organized, enjoys children and might like to be a teacher could be involved in tutoring or reading with younger students at school or volunteering at a local children’s festival or special event.
6. A student who likes to cook and has an interest in helping people could volunteer at a soup kitchen, help school council coordinate a seniors’ dinner project or organize a bake sale as a school fundraiser.

Review with the students the instructions for the activity as outlined on the handout. Allow approximately 5 minutes for the students to complete this activity.

Note: If the Introductory Pick Up and Go Kits “Get Started: Take the First Step!” and “Get Smart: Know Your Skills!” have been completed, the results from those activities may be used to complete the sections on the left side of the handout – the self-assessment activities in “Get Started: Take the First Step!” for the “Interests” and “Occupational Ideas” sections and the skills checklists from “Get Smart: Know Your Skills!” for the “Skills” section.

Upon completion, ask students to share some of the ideas they selected and why these ideas are a good “fit” for them. Inform students that it is important to take time to find volunteer work that “fits” as it will result in an overall more enjoyable volunteering experience. Remind students that whatever volunteer activities they choose to pursue it is also important that the time commitment required matches their availability. Once committed to a volunteer activity it is very important to follow it through to completion!



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WRAP UP

To clarify that the learning objectives have been accomplished, ask the students the following questions:

Are you aware of the variety of benefits you will receive from participating in volunteer work?

Are you able to identify the qualities that exemplify an outstanding volunteer?

Do you understand the importance of finding volunteer work that matches your interests, skills and/or occupational ideas?

Did you develop some ideas for potential volunteer work within your community?

Note: *The Appendix at the conclusion of this Pick Up and Go Kit contains a series of sample forms that may be used by teacher volunteer coordinators, students, parents and volunteer supervisors to formalize student volunteer experiences within a school's educational program. These forms, when completed, would make excellent additions to student portfolios.*

"Special thanks to staff members at both Volunteer Red Deer and Volunteer Resources at the Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre for the generous assistance and valuable information they provided during the development of this Pick Up and Go Kit."



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ANSWER KEY: THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

Workplace Readiness = WR

Career Planning = CP

Personal Satisfaction = PS

1. PS	11. PS
2. CP	12. WR
3. WR	13. CP
4. CP	14. WR
5. WR	15. WR
6. PS	16. CP
7. WR	17. CP
8. WR	18. PS
9. PS	19. WR
10. WR	20. PS

NOTE: While the answers above reflect the primary value received through each of the benefits listed in the activity, some students may have answers that vary from those selected for this answer key. All answers can be considered.

For example, benefit number 5, “Acquire specific job-related skills”, primarily benefits workplace readiness as the student may become more marketable for a specific type of work opportunity because of the particular skills developed; however, the student may also use the information as part of the career planning process by discovering what skills he or she likes and dislikes to provide occupational information and direction.

Such discrepancies in answers can create an opportunity for discussion and reinforces that the benefits of volunteering are broad and can impact many different aspects of one’s life.

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

Reap the Rewards!

Beside each benefit statement write the code (WR, CP, or PS) for the value category that the benefit would best fit into.

The Benefits of Volunteering	Value Category
1. Develop a sense of contributing or “giving back” to your community _____	WORKPLACE READINESS (WR)
2. Provide an advantage when applying to post-secondary school programs _____	
3. Improve your resume _____	
4. Become familiar with different work environments _____	
5. Acquire specific job-related skills _____	
6. Make new friends _____	CAREER PLANNING (CP)
7. Work with people of different ages and backgrounds _____	
8. Practice job maintenance skills like punctuality _____	
9. Develop a feeling of being appreciated _____	
10. Increase your network of contacts _____	
11. Put your beliefs and values into action _____	PERSONAL SATISFACTION (PS)
12. Gain new experiences _____	
13. Learn about a variety of occupations _____	
14. Collect items to build your portfolio _____	
15. Practice your work search skills _____	
16. Fulfill community involvement requirement for many scholarships _____	
17. Gain knowledge about yourself – strengths, skills, likes, dislikes _____	
18. Increase your self-confidence _____	
19. Add to your reference list _____	
20. Have fun! _____	

SO YOU THINK YOU CAN VOLUNTEER!

Read through the qualities of a star volunteer and place a checkmark in the boxes of the qualities you possess.

Star volunteers need to be:

ENTHUSIASTIC

- Having a positive attitude
- Willing to try new things
- Completing tasks to the best of your ability
- Putting forth energy and effort

☐

WILLING TO LEARN

- Wanting to improve your knowledge and skills
- Being able to accept guidance, direction, assistance, feedback
- Interested in training opportunities

☐

HELPFUL

- Being friendly, tolerant and accepting towards others
- Focusing on the tasks that need to be done
- Initiating help as needed
- Sharing your talents, skills, interests

☐

HONEST

- Being upfront to discuss problems or issues that arise
- Declining work you would find undesirable
- Continuing only as long as the experience is positive
- Displaying trustworthiness

☐

COMMITTED

- Attending scheduled shifts
- Being on time and punctual
- Calling ahead if unable to attend
- Finding a replacement if possible
- Following rules, policies and procedures

☐

A TEAM PLAYER

- Ability to work well with others including people of different ages and backgrounds
- Relating well with your adult volunteer supervisor or coordinator

☐

PASSIONATE

- Interested in gaining new experiences
- Wanting to make a difference
- Being supportive of the organization, activity or event volunteering for
- Putting your beliefs and values into action

☐

A COMMUNICATOR

- Able to converse with volunteer co-workers, individuals you are helping, and the volunteer coordinator
- Asking for help when needed
- Sharing ideas and suggestions

☐



FINDING THE RIGHT FIT!

Fill in your top interests, skills and occupational ideas at the left. Read through the volunteer activity ideas listed in the box at the right. Add some of the ideas specific to your community at the bottom of this list. Look for ideas that match your interests, skills and occupational ideas. In the middle box list some ideas for volunteer work that “fit” for you.

My interests are:

My best skills are:

My occupational ideas are:

MY IDEAS FOR VOLUNTEER WORK:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



VOLUNTEER IDEAS

- Hospital
- Senior's lodges
- Museum
- Wildlife sanctuary
- Nature centre
- Town / highway / river clean-up
- Second hand clothing or household goods shop
- Summer day camp – sports, art, music, drama
- Tutoring
- Community festivals
- Library program
- Dog walker
- Animal rescue
- 4-H club
- Soup kitchen
- Food drive
- Food bank
- Habitat for Humanity
- Coach or teach a sport
- Fun run or walk
- Sporting events
- Cultural events
- Church
- Church camps
- School – committees, fundraisers, scorekeeping, tutoring, tours
- Community clubs – service projects
- Youth board member – church, library, community

Other ideas in my community:

VOLUNTEER WORK DESCRIPTION

Name of Student: _____

Placement
Organization/group: _____

Main Role of Organization: _____

Who does the organization/group
serve? _____

Name of Supervisor: _____

Tasks to be done by Volunteer:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Schedule of Volunteer Work:

Day(s)	Times
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

If the schedule is irregular, please explain how it works:

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERING

Application and Parent Permission Form

Please complete the following information to apply for permission to participate in a school recognized community volunteering experience.

Name of Student: _____

Grade: _____

Volunteer Placement: _____

Supervisor: _____

Dates for Volunteering: _____

Student Signature: _____

Volunteer Coordinator Signature: _____

I agree to allow my son/daughter to participate in the above volunteering experience.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY LOG

Name of Student: _____

Placement: _____

Day/Date	Volunteer Hours	Tasks Performed
		1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
		1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
		1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
		1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
		1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
		1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
		1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Total Hours: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____

Student's Signature: _____

REFLECTING ON MY VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

How I contributed to the community with my volunteer work:

- _____
- _____
- _____

The skills and personal qualities I used and developed through my volunteer experience:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

The most positive aspects of my volunteer experience:

- _____
- _____
- _____

The least positive aspects of my volunteer experience:

- _____
- _____
- _____

How my volunteer experience has helped with my career planning process:

- _____
- _____
- _____

How my volunteer experience has helped with my employability skills:

- _____
- _____
- _____

I have added these names (and reasons for adding) to my network list:

- _____
- _____
- _____

VOLUNTEER SUPERVISOR REFERENCE

Name of Student: _____

Name of Supervisor: _____

Organization/Group: _____

Volunteer tasks performed by the student:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Skills demonstrated by completion of these tasks:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal qualities demonstrated by the student while performing volunteer tasks:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Additional Comments:

Supervisor's Signature

To the supervisor: Thank you for your part in assisting our students to develop volunteering, employability and personal skills.